Right Questions, Wrong Time

—John Cogley

THE

Commonweal

Bridge to the World

ROLE OF THE LAYMAN

by Bede Griffiths

From Britain

ROMANTICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by J. L. Benvenisti

Cultural Center

APOSTLE TO THE ARTISTS

by J. N. Moody

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1956 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685

U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 20¢

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

REVOLT IN THE SATELLITES

TO THE INDOMITABLE people of Poland, so often divided up and enslaved by larger and more powerful neighbors, must go much of the credit for the wave of anti-Soviet risings that culminated in the battle of Budapest. The Poles were the first to challenge their Soviet masters in such force as not to be denied. They showed unmistakably that the Soviet Union can be made to yield to determined popular pressure. Marshal Rokossovsky, who had kept back his Russian troops before Warsaw until the Nazis had completed their liquidation of the Polish Resistance, was sent packing to Moscow; Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, symbol of Polish resistance to the Soviet Union, was released from prison and restored as Primate.

The fact that Wladyslaw Gomulka, brought in as a "National Communist" to head the Polish Government, is well-known as an anti-Stalinist may enable him to keep the revolt in greater check in his country than Imre Nagy can in Hungary. Yet the determination of the Poles to achieve a way of life consonant with their long-defended traditions is so great that predictions at this stage are most difficult. One possibility is that revolt will spread so swiftly among the satellites, and go so far, that fighting will spread throughout the area. In this event could the West stand by and allow superior Russian forces to crush all national opposition?

But how did things get to the point where the audacious patriots of a small satellite like Hungary could force the mighty Soviet Union to offer such astounding terms as the withdrawal of all their troops, the formation of a government responsible to the national will, treatment as an absolute equal and the return of basic freedoms. (The untrustworthiness of these promises is another matter.)

Partly responsible was uncertainty among the leadership of the USSR. Then resentment of the satellite peoples has long been mounting. Their primary role as suppliers to Soviet Russia's heavy industry and war machine meant the neglect of their own economies. They were ground down to an enslavement and poverty from which no release was in sight. Their national leaders were imprisoned and often liquidated, and governments were foisted upon them which were simply Soviet mouthpieces. Their religious leaders were deposed and imprisoned; their press was silenced; everyone lived in dread of arbitrary arrest by "security police." Life became increasingly intolerable.

THE EAST GERMAN rising of three years ago and the more recent Poznan riots revealed the intensity of the popular hatred of the Soviet puppet regimes. And now the Poles and the Hungarians have openly defied their overlords and forced them to draw back somewhat. It is reported that the Hungarian rebels, in control of large areas of their beleaguered land, threatened to march on Budapest with seven divisions if Soviet tanks and troops were not withdrawn from Budapest. The Soviets even promised to withdraw from the devastated city. A few weeks ago such an ultimatum would have been unthinkable.

Moreover, the peoples of the world recoiled at the spectacle of Soviet tanks and machine guns cutting down unarmed demonstrators by the thousands in Budapest, where the streets literally ran with blood. Soviet prestige the world over has suffered a severe blow. Of course, the Kremlin has long gone its aggressive way regardless of world opinion, all the while courting it with well-tried propaganda. But this time an unprecedented weight of opinion was arrayed against the USSR in the discussions of the Hungarian crisis before the Se-

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curity Council. This sentiment re-echoes among free peoples not obsessed with Western colonialism, while anxiety mounts among officials in the satellites that have not yet spoken. But perhaps more important than any of these repercussions is the threat to Russia's hegemony in the Communist world. Tito is one rival. He has but a small, weak country to back him; yet the changes in Eastern Europe so far are taking a Titoist direction. The big rival, however, is Communist China, and it is significant that most recently Chou-en-Lai sent a message to the Poles encouraging them in the development of their own brand of Communism. Spread of the "national communism" idea could give Communist China quite an edge over Soviet Russia in the Far East, where they continue to be strong rivals. Actually, this should provide little comfort for the intended victims, as there is little to choose between the two in such matters as religious suppression and the shackling of human liberty. The best to be hoped for in the immediate future is a series of stresses and strains in the Russo-Chinese axis.

These courageous blows for human freedom and their initial success are welcome developments indeed. Their effects could have been multiplied had not France and Britain been concurrently enmeshed in a harsh struggle to retain certain colonies. It is all too easy for the diffident to cite bloody repressions in Algiers as equivalent to the use of tanks in Budapest. And if these severe Soviet reverses serve to compensate for the alarming Soviet successes in a Middle East which long had denied them access, they redound little to our own credit. In fact, the weakening of the Soviet satellite empire constitutes the first favorable development of any consequence in the cold war for many months.

NEXT WEEK

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP presents her survey of this season's Children's Books. She says of religious books:

"If it is more difficult for an author to hide his true self from himself and others in a children's book than in an adult one, it is well nigh impossible to do so in a religious book for children. There, willy-nilly, everything stands revealed—the scope of his intellect, the range of his sensitivity, the sincerity and depth of his inner dialogue."

EDUCATION IN POLITICS

FOR DECADES, the American people most concerned—parents, educators, politicians—have agreed on the rather startling premise that the nation's schools should be kept out of politics. This year's Presidential campaign, however, has shaken that premise down to its withered roots. Realizing that the question of Federal aid to schools has become, like a lion in the living room, hard to handle but impossible to ignore, both President Eisenhower and Mr. Stevenson devoted a large part of their early campaigning to espousing school programs, and took occasion to belabor the rival Party for the failure of the last Congress to produce school aid legislation. The sharp exchanges between the two candidates made it quite clear that the schools have entered vigorously, almost violently, into partisan politics.

Like the politicians, the teachers, too, have recognized that certain educational problems can only be settled at the polling place. Long the victims of other political pressure groups, educators in growing numbers seem anxious to apply a little pressure themselves. The National Education Association, for example, has already announced that it will establish a lobby in Washington and will fight for Federal aid to education with every legal method at its command.

It is encouraging to note that politicians and educators alike are more aware than ever before that the nation's school needs, like those of its farms and factories, are objects of legitimate political concern and are therefore to be supported by political pressures. But it is discouraging to note that the group which can most effectively apply political pressure for the betterment of the nation's schools —the parents of school children—have shown, as yet, no eagerness to enter the political arena.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, for example, has a membership of over ten million; the fact that these members are tightly organized into local and state chapters gives the PTA a structure ready-made for very effective politicking. Unfortunately, the PTA shows little willingness to use its political potential. Its governing board is not allowed to endorse either a party or a candidate, and the PTA did not allow itself to support any of the recent bills submitted to Congress to win badly needed Federal funds for school construction.

The democratic process does not exist in lofty abstractions; it involves expressions of will by blocs of the population, and attempts to make the group will recognized by bringing group-pressure to bear.

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Politicians are now ready to take education seriously; teacher groups are now willing to take politics seriously. It would be tragic if the parents of school children should take neither politics nor education seriously enough to entrust the educational needs of the nation to its democratic process.

NEGRO VOTERS IN THE SOUTH

AMERICAN COMMUNISTS always had a standard gambit whenever someone pointed out that freedom was hardly flourishing under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Any mention of the slave labor camps in the Soviet Union, for example, was sure to provoke a set reply, the Stalinist's conditioned response: "What about the Negro in the South? What about the lynchings?" Shortly before the election, an exchange somewhat reminiscent of this stale dialogue took place, with one big difference—this time the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was involved, speaking with a justification the Communists always lacked.

It all began when Senator Eastland of Mississippi broadcast an appeal for free elections in Poland. His point about Poland was certainly one that all Americans, Negroes and whites alike, would endorse, but Senator Eastland might decently have been a little self-conscious in making the plea. Officials of the NAACP felt the same way, and immediately after Senator Eastland's broadcast NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins sent him a telegram:

"We have noted your statement in the press," Mr. Wilkins said, "and are happy to join you in urging 'free elections in Poland.' And in turn we call upon you to join us in urging free elections in Mississippi. We are convinced that you can do far more than urge free elections in your home state. You can use your influence as a U.S. Senator to open the polls to the half million potential Negro voters who are now disfranchised in Mississippi by fraud, trickery and terror. . . ."

The South is not Poland, but Mr. Wilkins' indignation did have a solid basis in fact. Shortly before the election, Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney 3d, chief of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, announced that the FBI was engaged in an extensive investigation of widespread and possibly concerted efforts by white supremacists in the South to remove qualified Negroes from the voting lists. According to Mr. Olney, an "unprecedented, mass movement" to disfranchise Negroes was evident in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina; he cited newspaper reports to show that in some areas members of the White Citizens Councils were hard at work in registry offices, eliminating Negro voters from the rolls by hair-splitting technicalities and by applying tests so rigid that the members of the Citizens Councils themselves could never have passed them.

Conspiracy to deprive United States citizens of their rights is an offense punishable by a fine up to $10,000 or imprisonment or both. In such cases, little can be done before the election; existing civil rights statutes make it impossible for the Justice Department to take action until a citizen is actually deprived of the right to vote on Election Day. But Mr. Olney promised that after the election the Justice Department will prosecute any one found to have denied a Negro his right to vote because of color.

In an election year, all this could hardly be expected to take place without some reference to partisan politics. Thus when he made his statement Mr. Olney, whose chief is former Dewey-strategist Herbert Brownell, was careful to point out that he had repeatedly advised the appropriate committee in both House and Senate of the abuses on voting in the South, but without getting any response; the chairmen of both committees, of course, are Democrats. And on the other side of the political fence, Mississippi's Governor Coleman promptly denounced Mr. Olney's statement as "a cheap political bluff . . . designed to get votes from the Northern Negro." For our part, we do not care about the politics of the matter; the denial of the right to vote because of race is too serious a matter for such considerations to interfere. We would simply like to point out to Mr. Olney and the Justice Department that the best possible retort to Governor Coleman's charge would be prompt prosecution in all cases in which a Negro citizen has been unjustly denied his right to vote. If, on the other hand, no more is heard of the matter after the election, then Governor Coleman's charge will have been proved all-too-true.

CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

THE RECENT letter of President Eisenhower warning Premier Ben-Gurion against taking any "forceful initiative" in the Middle East is but the latest example of the Administration's rushing into a vacuum which it had helped to create. This warning, significantly enough, was not heeded.

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Five years ago the United States was a great power friendly to both the Arab bloc and Israel, and the influence which this country could wield in the Middle East served as a diplomatic buffer between the two. Today the United States is resented when not hated by the Arab nations, and is viewed with suspicion by Israel.

The history of the last four years in the Middle East is far too complicated to allow of either a single or a simple explanation of how and why our power and prestige in this area have shrunk almost to the vanishing point. But one factor in this decline has certainly been this Administration's failure to design a policy which would be clear to ourselves, to our allies and to the nations of the Middle East.

This nation was right in fostering the development of independence in that area; it erred, however, in not heeding what history so clearly shows: that nationalism is a deep and potentially explosive force. As a result of trying to make history without, at the same time, reading it, this nation was unprepared for the consequences of its own actions.

Thus we supported the cause of national independence for Tunisia and Morocco without paying much attention to the effect which such support would have on the national pride of the French. We urged the rapid emergence of Egypt as an independent nation, and helped to speed the British out of the Suez. But we had no policy to take care of the next step; we assumed that an independent Egypt would be forever grateful for this country's "good services," without realizing that new nations are rarely grateful but *are* always proudly sensitive and ambitious.

We offered little resistance and no direction to Gamal Nasser's bid to become the leader of the Arab bloc, but when we felt that he had become too powerful, we pulled the rug from under him by suddenly refusing to allocate funds for the Aswan Dam. We did not foresee that Nasser would rise from the floor and seize the Suez.

Nor did we foresee how Israel, with the pride and fears of a small, new nation, would react to this country's repeated rejections of her repeated pleas for defense arms and planes. We declared ourselves unwilling to contribute to an "arms race" in the Middle East at the very time that U.S. tanks were being sent to Saudi Arabia for "defense" and Soviet arms and planes were being sent to Egypt. In Cairo, meanwhile, the government radio was declaring that "Egypt is the surgeon that must cut out the cancer, Israel, which endangers the Arab peoples."

It is only realistic for this country now to realize that its policy of no-policy has helped to prepare the current crisis in the Middle East.

THE ABRIDGED READER

AMERICANS have long been touchy about the Philistinism which is said to stalk their land. Our cultural critics have searched it out tirelessly and attacked it vigorously. Whenever it became conscious of its true nature, it shriveled, shrank and faded from the scene. At least this was true in the past. But now we have developed a spirit of Philistinism which seems terribly at ease in the United States.

The most common manifestations are evident to all. They are the book clubs which bring to every subscriber the "best" book the month has produced, the summarized novel for the "modern" reader who lacks the time to enjoy the entire work, the "authorized" abridgments of the classics with pictures from the movies that have, seemingly, brought them to life.

Higher on the scale we have such series as "Great Novels of the World" in which Somerset Maugham, in his urbane, workmanlike prose, explains why he selected each novel and how he has skipped passages that interfere with the easy flow of the narrative. And the abominable task that he does well, his imitators manage poorly.

A rationale for such actions is unintentionally provided by a weekly columnist for the N.Y. *Times Book Review* who asks, "was I attempting to belittle two of the greatest American writers when I inferred that *Moby Dick* is overstuffed and that James, in most of his work, earned himself the title of the longest-winded writer in the history of letters?" and then seriously discusses his negative answer at length. This same critic can speak of Henry James, Joyce and Proust as prolix writers and then offer their greatness as a sincere defense against his criticism. He can speak of form and content in art as if they were easily separable, as if one were a mere shell for the other and say that "as a work of art *War and Peace* would be still more admirable without its interpolations."

Such real departures from critical judgment can be dismissed as unimportant, as the price we pay for mass culture. But if this is our conclusion, we must admit that it is a heavy price to pay for the advantages we possess. At least it will temper our self-congratulations for the quantity and quality of books that come tumbling daily from our presses.

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Role of the Layman

"IT IS THE LAITY WHICH FORMS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD"

BEDE GRIFFITHS

IT IS almost a century since Monsignor Talbot wrote to Cardinal Manning: "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all. . . ." It would be unfair to suggest that these words, which caused so much distress to Cardinal Newman, were representative of Catholic opinion even a hundred years ago. But there was certainly a strong tendency to minimize the function of the layman in the Church and to view the Church as a hierarchical structure of which the layman was a kind of appendage. Nowadays all that has changed. The importance which is now attached to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, the concept of Catholic Action, the Liturgical Movement, have all helped to reinstate the laity in its proper position as a definite "order" within the Church with its own specific function. As Pope Pius XII has declared, "the faithful, and more especially the laity, are in the front line of the life of the Church; by them the Church is the vital principle of human society."

These words of Pope Pius indicate the specific function of the laity. The Church has its hierarchical structure, consisting of the clergy and the bishops under the supreme authority of the Pope, whose function it is to teach, to rule and to administer the Sacraments by which the life of Christ is communicated to mankind. But the means by which this life is able to penetrate into the world, to become the leaven of human society, to reconstruct the world according to the principles of the Gospel, is the laity. In the past, perhaps, the emphasis has always tended to be on this hierarchical structure and every effort has been made to perfect it in every detail. The result is a certain danger of the Church's seeming to stand apart from the world, perfect in its own structure of liturgy, theology and organization, but separated by a great gulf from the ordinary world.

It is the laity which forms the bridge between the Church and the world. The layman belongs integrally and vitally to the Church, but he also belongs to the world. Nowadays we realize, perhaps more than ever in the past, the immense need there is to redeem the world—not merely to redeem people from the world, but to redeem the world itself, to enter into its economic and social and political life and strive to bring the principles of the Gospel to bear on it; to enter into its intellectual life and try to make the influence of a Christian philosophy felt in the universities and in the arts and in the whole pattern of its culture. We live in a world which has become progressively alienated from Christianity and which requires to be redeemed on almost every level of existence. This must be above all the work of the laity and it is for this reason that the lay apostolate has become a matter of such urgency and importance.

THIS IS not to suggest that the work of the laity is, as it were, outside the Church, or that it has no specific function within the Church in direct association with the hierarchy. On the contrary, the very meaning of Catholic Action is that the laity is actively associated with the hierarchy in the apostolate of the Church. The present age has seen a renewed interest not only in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ but also in the concept of the priesthood of the laity. Every Christian is incorporated by his Baptism into the Mystical Body of Christ and made an active member of that Body with his own specific function. In this connection the importance of Confirmation has also received a new emphasis, as it is precisely the Sacrament by which the powers conferred at Baptism become mature and fit the Christian to fulfill his function as an active member of the Church.

For in Baptism a Christian is given a participation in the very life of Christ, and specifically in His threefold power as Prophet, Priest and King. The words of the Apocalypse of St. John apply to all Christians: "He has proved His love for us by washing us clean from our sins in His own blood and made us a royal race of priests to serve God His Father." It is the 'people of God' as a whole, the *laos* from which the laity takes its name, which has been made into a

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'kingdom of priests.' Among this people there are, of course, certain individuals set apart, like Aaron and his brethren in the Old Testament, to perform specific priestly functions, but the whole people shares in its own degree in the priesthood of Christ and is associated with the hierarchy in the work of Christ.

This same realization of the role of the laity can be seen in the Liturgical Movement, which has for its governing principle the fact that the layman is not merely present at Mass as a spectator, but has the right and the duty to share in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. The priest says at the Offertory: *Orate, fratres, ut meum et vestrum sacrificium . . .*; it is the sacrifice of the whole Mystical Body of Christ which is being offered and the people offer it with the priest as members of the one Body, although the function of the priest within the Body remains unique and distinct. The effect of this doctrine on the ordinary Christian when he begins to realize its implications is staggering: he realizes his membership in the Body of Christ in a concrete way; he knows himself to be a living and acting part of the Whole.

If Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist all receive an added significance for the layman when he understands his proper place in the Body of Christ, the Sacrament of Matrimony receives perhaps still more significance. In the past, marriage has not always been allowed its proper place in the life of the Church. There was a strong tendency in the early Church to exalt virginity to such an extent that marriage was correspondingly depreciated. The idea grew up in the Middle Ages that the only way for a man who sought "perfection," that is, who sought to realize fully the implications of his life as a Christian, was to renounce the world and to vow himself to chastity. It is only in recent years that the idea of marriage as a vocation to sanctity has come to be widely recognized. In the early centuries Christian perfection was nearly always seen in terms of flight from the world; for us it is seen more and more as a demand to enter into the world, to face its challenge and to redeem it.

THIS REALIZATION has led to the recognition that there is a need, for the layman, of a new concept of sanctity, a sanctity which is deeply and fully engaged with the world and for which the Sacrament of Matrimony has a unique importance. This is not to say that the ideal of the religious life has lost any of its value, but it has to be seen in the wider perspective of the Christian life as a whole. The problem for many Christians today is how to be radically detached from the world and dedicated completely to Christ, and yet at the same time to be engaged with the world, implicated in its essential problems and working for its redemption. It is upon the layman that the primary responsibility falls for bringing the Gospel directly into the heart of the world and forming a Christian society there.

But this is no easy task. The world makes its own very exacting demands, which cannot be evaded. It is not as though there were any ready-made Christian solution to the world's economic and social problems. The Gospel is a leaven; it inculcates a spirit; it provides certain guiding principles. But the application of these principles to life is something which requires extraordinary insight and a close acquaintance with practical problems.

In other words, what is demanded of the layman is not only a knowledge and zeal for the principles of the Gospel, but also a very close and exact study of the facts of any situation, economic, social or political, in which he is involved, and of the feelings of the people affected by it. This means that he may have to work with people whose ideology is very different from his own and cooperate in movements which may have no specifically Christian character and yet need to be injected with the spirit of the Gospel. The problem is present in nearly all political parties, in the trade-union movements and in those many spheres of social welfare where Catholics are often found to play so little part.

THIS PENETRATION into the world demands intelligence on the part of the laity; it requires people to think for themselves and to be prepared to act independently, while still keeping to the guidance of the Church in general principles. Thus the great need is for the intellectual formation of the laity. It is here that the immensity of the task which is set the laity in modern times becomes apparent. During the past two or three centuries the world has made advances beyond all precedent in science, history, philosophy—indeed, in every sphere of knowledge. In almost every case these advances have been made without any reference to the Church and often in direct opposition to it. Yet all this knowledge belongs of right to the Church, because all truth, whether human or divine, derives from Christ and can be properly understood only in relation to Him.

The Catholic intellectual, therefore, has a double task. He must first assimilate all this new knowledge; he has to master its technique and submit to the rigorous requirements of its methods. But at the same time he has to exercise a continual critique of all its principles and conclusions. He can never accept the presuppositions which underlie much of modern thought, but has to submit them to a drastic revision. A good example of this is to be found in the Catholic attitude to the psychology of Freud. The Catholic must be prepared to learn everything that is to be learned from

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the psycho-analytical method of Freud and from its basic insights, and at the same time must reject entirely the materialistic basis on which Freud constructed his system.

The same principle has to be applied to physics and biology, to history and philosophy. Always there has to be the readiness to learn; to accept new facts, new methods, new insights; but at the same time there must be a radical criticism of the underlying principles. In this task the Catholic has the advantage of possessing a coherent philosophy which is capable, in principle at least, of application to every problem. But there is a danger of this very applicability becoming a positive barrier to a real assimilation of knowledge. It is only too easy for Thomism to be regarded as a closed and completely self-sufficient system. To be able to grasp the fundamental principles of Thomism and yet to keep the mind open to every new movement in thought and every advance in knowledge is extremely difficult, but very necessary.

It is not sufficient to expose the errors of different systems of philosophy by bringing them to the bar of Aristotle and St. Thomas. A Catholic today, for instance, cannot ignore the importance of existentialism in its various forms or of the phenomenological method of Husserl. We have, fortunately, a good example of the attitude of a genuine Catholic philosopher towards such movements in the reactions of Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain to existentialism. Each has made himself the exponent of an authentic Thomism and yet has shown himself marvelously alive to the currents of modern thought.

It is this respect for truth wherever it is to be found that should be the mark of a Catholic mind. If the world is to be won for Christ, it can only be by the assimilation by the Catholic mind of every aspect of truth which the world has to offer, and this not merely in the sphere of theory and speculation but of morality and practical life. Ultimately it must mean, perhaps I may be allowed to add, the assimilation not only of modern Western modes of thought and practice but also of the wisdom of the ancient East. The Church has yet to face the challenge of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Islam: to assimilate the truth which they contain and separate it from the errors in which it may be involved. For the Church can only grow by means of this continual assimilation of truth of every kind, bringing it into vital relation with its own essential truth, in which all truth is implicitly contained. Thus the bringing back of the world to Christ is but an aspect of the growth of the Church to her own maturity, the building up of the Body of Christ, and in this work the laity is, in the words of Pope Pius, "in the front-line of action."

FROM BRITAIN

Romantics in the Middle East

J. L. BENVENISTI

THERE HAS always been something agreeably ridiculous about the British Empire, and, in view of its top-heavy dependence on foreign trade, the equilibristic feat by which it keeps a precarious balance can never lose its character of a somewhat entertaining miracle. But it is a miracle that requires certain human qualities, and they are qualities by no means universally forthcoming. Indeed, to keep the system going, to apply, when a breakdown threatens, the swift and drastic remedies that seem called for, may well be more in keeping with the romantic knight-errantry of the Tories than with the spirit of their Labor opponents, who are so imbued with the ideals of bourgeois respectability that they find recurrent crises vaguely disreputable.

This difference is well exemplified by the first bristling and belligerent reaction of the Tory government to the Suez crisis, a reaction that is in such marked contrast to the more pacific and legalistic attitude of Her Majesty's Opposition. Time alone will show whether the Tories have allowed their romantic imagination to run away with them, for what they fear is something much more serious than the present storm in the Suez teacup. What haunts them—and they may well be right—is the possibility of a relatively rapid alienation of Britain's Middle, Far Eastern and African markets and sources of supply, an alienation that will progressively accelerate as Britain's standing as a great power declines.

Yet, by a grim and somewhat ironic paradox, the Tories, who are on this occasion distinctly more alert than the rest to Britain's present peril, are themselves

Mr. Benvenisti, a British author and economist, contributes frequently to The Commonweal.

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to a large extent its authors, and this by reason of that same romantic imagination which at this moment is so remarkably sharpening their senses. The essence of the present threat is undoubtedly resurgent Arab nationalism, which, so it is feared, may well trigger off other and wider disturbances if it is allowed to get the upper hand, and it is Arab nationalism that is the center of the Tory nightmare. But the fact remains that if this Pan-Arab bogey has any reality, then what has raised it is the persistent pro-Arab obsession of Britain's administrators and "Middle East experts"—nearly always men of Toryish sympathies and tradition—who are the real formulators of British policy, whatever government may be in power. This pro-Arab obsession has bedeviled the whole of our Middle Eastern policy since the days of the Palestine mandate, for it is with the Palestine mandate that the whole wretched policy begins.

TWENTY YEARS later there was the miserable business of the 1939 White Paper, which virtually closed Palestine to Jewish immigration when the Hitler terror was already at its height, although it is too much to hope that the episodes of the *Struma* and the other refugee-packed hell-ships which were turned away from the Palestine coast will be either forgiven or forgotten. But at that time the second world war was already imminent, and there was at least some faint excuse for doing nothing that would antagonize the more vocal sections of Arab opinion. Actually, despite the White Paper, some of the Arabs did come over to the Axis when the odds seemed for the moment to favor that party, so the British really incurred all that odium for nothing.

When Hitler was gone, it was the Russians who were in theory supposed to be ready to gather the Arabs into their arms and the 1939 policy was repeated, although the Cadillac-driving Arab oil barons, who together with King Farouk of happy memory still ruled the Arab world, would all rather have tied themselves in little knots than come within a hundred miles of a Communist. So the pitiful survivors of the gas-oven were again refused admission to the National Home, and were actually in some cases sent back to Germany.

The climax came when Britain, having declared the mandate unworkable and turned the whole cat's cradle over to the United Nations, flatly refused to implement the latter's recommendation of partition—which her own Royal Commission had vainly put forward some ten years previously—and even refused, as long as she remained the paramount power, to allow any other nation or group of nations to establish this, the only sensible form of settlement. Meanwhile, until the actual laying down of her mandate she seems to have done a great many things to hamper the Jews and strengthen their enemies for the conflict that was now bound to ensue.

These decisions constitute something of an enigma. It is pointless to interpret British policy in this area as mere Machiavellian power politics, since, viewed in that way, it obviously makes no sense at all; for the most part it was, as in 1939, quite incapable of attaining what, under the Machiavellian supposition,

would have been its object. Alternatively, as just before the termination of the mandate, it went dangerously further than mere expediency demanded. Even considerations relating to possible air bases dictated no more than an honest neutrality, and, by behaving as she did, Britain quite needlessly damaged her international standing.

Such considerations have led that extremely able writer Arthur Koestler to conclude that the argument of apparent expediency by which, *faute de mieux*—and despite its transparent weakness—the British probably sought to justify their conduct to themselves, was no more than an unconscious rationalization of a deep-seated anti-Semitism. I believe that conclusion to be largely incorrect, and in any case it seems in contradiction with much that happened prior to 1939. I certainly believe that the anti-Semitic manifestations, such as they were, were something quite different from crude race-prejudice, and that they are to be interpreted, at least as far as the higher levels of British administration are concerned, as nothing more than the obverse side of that same mystical pro-Arabism to which I have alluded.

ONE SOURCE of the trouble, of course, was that the Jews, with their vital democracy and strong political maturity, posed the British with an administrative problem that lay wholly outside their experience and one which often made British officials vaguely uneasy. In England itself the governing class had long ago come to terms with socialism, democracy and all that, and its members are today merrily hobnobbing with trade-union officials, pinching most of the best jobs in the Labor party and generally playing old Harry with the class stereotype. But the outposts of

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Britain's once far-flung empire often leave something to be desired as schools of ideological readjustment, and in some cases at least British officials have perhaps shown a reluctance to adapt themselves to the century in which they live.

Added to this is the fact that the apparently changeless feudalism of Arab society represented something agreeably familiar to British officials. The British Empire was undergoing a somewhat disagreeable process of contraction and there was not much of that kind of set-up left to be enjoyed. In these circumstances the Arab world seemed to offer a veritable home away from home to displaced British proconsuls.

I am not for a moment suggesting that these men were attracted by any narrowly selfish hopes of office and emolument. That is not, in my view, a British failing. It was simply the attraction of the friendly and known as against the unknown and forbidding—that and the issue of color and drama which this highly relevant quality of romantic imagination seemed, where the Arab world was concerned, still capable of evoking in the mind.

But here we come to the heart of the matter, the reason for this gigantic blunder, the blunder that has landed the British—and indeed the whole world—in one of the nastiest situations in which it has found itself for years. Because the British felt so very much at home with the Arabs and because the Arab world gave scope to the kind of part they liked to play—and were used to playing—they tended hopelessly to overestimate Arab potentialities, to see the Arabs as a great but latent history-making force whose ultimate triumph, though still concealed in the womb of time, was nevertheless irresistible. Their own military experts told them that the moment they left the country and serious fighting broke out, the Jews would wipe the floor with the Arab armies. They can hardly have utterly disbelieved the predictions of the military, but it must have seemed as though these experts were foretelling a reversal of manifest historical destiny, a violation, almost, of the moral order of the universe, a thing that, despite the evidence of their eyes and senses —and, let me repeat, of their military experts—the "true Englishman" must always continue to believe impossible.

But manifest—or apparently manifest—destiny was reversed, and the moral order of the universe—or what had appeared to be the moral order of the universe—was violated. The Jews did wipe the floor with their enemies precisely as the military experts had foretold —or at least, if the expression "wiping the floor" seems extreme, they inflicted a definite and recognizable defeat and it was one of the most disastrous decisions in history.

Had the defeat been inflicted by Britain, acting not under her own authority as the mandatory power but as executor for the United Nations, or better still, had it been done by the United Nations themselves—and there was actually a chance of that, for on this remarkable occasion Russia had voted with the United States—the defeat would not have been felt to be dishonorable. There might have been some resentment against Britain in either event, but one suspects that in the special circumstances of the case the truly impartial role that Britain would then have been playing would have been recognized, and that such resentment would not have gone very deep. Certainly, in the interests of peace and humanity, it was a risk worth taking. But nothing of this kind happened. The Arabs were defeated, not by Britain or the United Nations, but by the Jews. They were defeated by a numerically small, hopelessly "inferior" people laboring under gigantic handicaps—and the sting of that defeat was unbearable.

HERE IS the *fons et origo malorum,* the very fountainhead of Britain's present woes. Principal among the Arab defeats was that of Egypt, and the Egyptian defeat, which, rightly or wrongly, General Naguib ascribed to corruption in the matter of arms supply, was the chief justification and pretext—and to a large extent the chief cause—of the Egyptian revolution. After that, events followed a familiar pattern: government by military junta soon gave way to a full-blown personal totalitarian dictatorship, which is showing itself most adept in all the techniques of mass-indoctrination. Thus Arab nationalism, which until now had led a somewhat half-hearted existence, may well become a disagreeably menacing reality, and the British nightmare of a Middle East in flames may really be turning from a pipe-dream into a fact—all through the unwitting instrumentality of the British themselves. Such are the penalties of illusion—and such the price of that romantic imagination which has brewed this kettle of exceedingly malodorous fish.

And yet, odd as it may sound, this quality of the romantic imagination, which here has led Britain so disastrously astray, is one which she simply cannot do without. By every rational calculation her very existence —at any rate, her continued existence as a major power —is a sort of standing refutation of the laws of nature, and if she has been able to carry on at all, it is because she has relied so largely on inspired improvisers, visionaries and eccentrics, men whose strong imaginative equipment will sometimes produce a great sharpening of insight and sometimes, as in the present instance, lead them quite wildly astray.

Now such types must, I think, inevitably be men with a highly individualistic and vaguely aristocratic background, and I do not see how Britain can continue as a world power—and if she is not that she is

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nothing—unless her social structure continues to be capable of throwing them up. A crazy set-up like hers can, in the last resort, only be run by people who are a little bit crazy themselves.

Perhaps this time they have carried the craziness a little too far. At the moment Britain is obviously trying to achieve some kind of a compromise over the Suez business. Whether the attempt will succeed or whether the compromise, if achieved, will be anything other than a thinly veiled diplomatic defeat, it is, at this writing, impossible to say. In the latter case it might well be the beginning of the end. If men were always guided by motives of pure economic self-interest, then Britain would have little to fear from Asia, Africa or anywhere else, but she may now well be dealing with other and more explosive forces. When these get loose, men are moved by other considerations than the logic of the balance sheet.

And yet, knowing this country as I do, and knowing its vertiginously checkered past, I am not despondent. I tend to adopt a Micawber-like attitude. So far something has always turned up, and something will probably turn up again—but we must really try to keep that romantic imagination a little more under control.

ITALIAN CULTURAL CENTER

Apostle to the Artists

J. N. MOODY

IN ITALY today there is a Catholic program which opposes Communism, shows daring and originality, and has the added advantage of being a success. The scene is Milan, the dynamic industrial city of northern Italy, which is also the intellectual capital of the nation. In the center of the city, opposite the city hall and not far from the home of Manzoni, is the neo-classic church of San Fedele. It was built by Saint Charles Borromeo, the great reforming bishop of the city, and given to the Jesuits as their Milanese headquarters. With the suppression of the Society, it became a parochial church. Only when it had been badly damaged by Allied bombing during the war did Cardinal Schuster give it back to the Jesuits.

The Jesuit Fathers began with characteristic vigor to put it to use. Next to the church they built an attractively modern cultural center which houses many of their specialized activities. Here they publish *Letture,* a monthly critique of books, and *Aggiornamenti Sociali,* a serious monthly review of social problems that is modeled on *Action populaire* of Vanves and *Social Order* of Saint Louis. They run a youth center that has expanded with the construction of a large sports area on the outskirts of the city.

But the core of San Fedele is the Cultural Center itself. This activity has an attractive hall that can seat more than three hundred, and which has special lighting and equipment that permits its use as a gallery for art exhibitions. But the Cultural Center is more than a very modern *salle;* it is a man with extraordinary vision in a Society that has produced its share of remarkable personalities.

Padre Favaro was a parish priest near Milan for many years. He became a Jesuit just before the last war and, during the conflict, served in the Italian Air Force. After Italy's defeat, he was assigned to the newly acquired San Fedele. He had no special training in art. But he noted the success the Communist Party had in mobilizing the artistic and literary groups in a city which sets the cultural tone for Italy. The Party had set up the *Casa Cultura* to which practically all of Milan's post-war artists belonged. He spent some time in making soundings and establishing contacts, and in 1953 he was ready with his formal program.

He believed that many artists were unhappy over the Party's control of their work and could be weaned away if they could be convinced that they would have more freedom under Catholic auspices. He also knew that religious themes hold an immense attraction for the artistic temperament, and that artists and writers would welcome an opportunity to discover the sources of religious inspiration. Accordingly, he invited both Catholics and Communists to the Center for free discussion on artistic problems and opened his gallery to young Communist artists who otherwise would have slender chance of holding exhibitions.

EXHIBITIONS at San Fedele soon won national attention. The Padre would send letters to all artists under thirty, inviting them to send their work and submit its quality to a board of distinguished

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Father Moody, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, recently returned from Europe.

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judges. The winners would not only receive prizes; reproductions of their best efforts would be published in beautiful volumes.

The press of Italy responded to this novel situation of a Jesuit's publishing the work of Communists. Discussion filled columns and *L'Unita* became alarmed. This official Communist daily dipped deeply into its murky vocabulary to find new cadences of abuse. Its issue of May 20, 1956 marked the Padre as a most dangerous enemy. Yet the Communist group Ceramica La Colanna gave him one of their originals as a gift, and the Communist painter, Remo Brindisi, was one of several who left the Party and was readmitted to the Church.

Even more provocative were the discussions to which Marxists were not only invited, but in which they participated as speakers. One of the most successful was a series on "What the Church asks from the artist," and "What the artist asks from the Church." Another favorite was "Religion in the Theater," which attracted leading stage personalities and assured the success of a religious play which had been violently attacked by the Communists. A Japanese art exhibition was followed by a discussion of Japanese culture. The greatest attraction was the exhibition of Russian art, inaugurated by a celebrated choir of the Russicum College in Rome, and followed by panels on Russian art and literature. The whole was so well received that a movie based upon it, entitled "Marxism and Materialism," was shown all over Italy.

The program broadened into areas that were not strictly artistic. A panel of four university professors and two journalists debated the "Heritage of the Risorgimento," a topic of particular sensitivity in Italy. The panel, of varying opinions, attempted to reach agreement on whether the movement for Italian independence was necessarily anti-clerical. A similarly composed panel discussion proposed changes in the Italian divorce laws. A conference on the "Significance of Poetry in the Modern World" was a conspicuous success. M. Mauriac and other writers discussed their books. A panel on the "Press and Morality" brought together a French and Italian team of discussants. Other international panels treated the "Religious Crisis of Today" and the "Role of India." All of these were so popular that invitations had to be limited to selected lists so that the most interested and influential could be reached.

A POPULAR feature at the Center is the moral and artistic critique of films. Russian, Japanese and Western European movies are shown and discussed by a panel of artists and theologians with the audience participating. The director and principal players are invited and often attend. Each year a prize is given for the most artistically satisfying Italian film. This year the prize is a Crucifixion sculptured in a rhythmic pattern in the most advanced contemporary style. The work itself had won a prize at a previous competition at the Center.

As in all other fields, Father Favaro's contact with the people of the cinema brings spiritual gain. The Italian director, Antonio Pietrangeli, had planned a movie on the Carmelites that had as its theme the futility of the contemplative life. The issue arose in one of the Center's panel discussions, and the director was forced to reexamine his opinion. The Padre induced him to read the works of Thomas Merton. Now he is convinced of the aesthetic beauty of the Carmelite life and its capacity to inspire our contemporary world. The film will reflect this point of view.

The yearly program of the Cultural Center works toward a grand climax in early spring. In the year of Mozart's anniversary there was a concert of his music in the Church of San Fedele. Another program ended with an appearance of the Dresden Orchestra from East Germany, their first in Italy. The Communist press was particularly incensed that the celebrated musical organization from behind the Iron Curtain should become the tool of the "wily Jesuit."

These happenings in Milan have had wide repercussions. Events at the Center are commented on at length in the French and Italian press, with the tempo rising when the subjects are controversial. The Padre's consistent policy of welcoming Marxists to his forums has caused surprise and some opposition. But he has the approval of Archbishop Montini, who shows his favor by having the Padre's group advise on the artistic aspects of the many new churches being built in Milan's suburbs. As a consequence, these churches are all contemporary in design and decoration. Father Favaro was particularly gratified when the Central Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art sent him last year a warm appreciation of what he has done.

Still the Padre is not satisfied. His present hope is to have a world-wide competition in religious art that would encourage young artists in every country to enter this field. From what I have seen of him, he will make it.

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RIGHT QUESTIONS, WRONG TIME

IN HIS big speech on discontinuing hydrogen bomb tests, Adlai Stevenson said: "The H-bomb is already so powerful that a single bomb could destroy the largest city in the world—a single bomb." In a later speech, Stevenson quoted a powerful paragraph from the Pope's Christmas message depicting the horror of hydrogen war.

Republican leaders spoke in equally sober manner about the power of existing weapons. There was clearly no dispute about what the future might hold; both sides agreed that the United States and Russia already have the means to blast each other into kingdom come. All agreed that disarmament is ultimately the only humane and logical course for the future.

The only real question was whether we can take even one step in that direction at the present time. Specifically, can we afford to call off our own H-bomb tests at least as long as we are assured that there are no tests going on in the Soviet Union? Implicit in this question are two more: Is there any way we can gain such assurances about H-bomb activities in the USSR? Would we be secure, even with these assurances, if we did not stay ahead of the Russians?

The questions were debated, if that is the word, in the full glare of a Presidential campaign. They were debated by partisan politicians with partisan fervor. The Republican spokesmen all agreed with the President; the Democrats with Stevenson. But these questions involve the very fate of the human race, and who was there to speak for Man?

Even the scientists tended to answer according to political preference. They were about equally divided between those who believed Stevenson overstated the dangers of fallout and those willing to be counted in his corner.

Perhaps one could not expect complete disinterestedness from the candidates themselves. Many observers pointed out that the Democrats regarded the matter as a good campaign issue. Newspapers noted that the Stevenson camp was surprised and heartened by the lively response he got when he first raised the question. If the proposals had been received indifferently, Stevenson might have turned his attention to other matters.

Eisenhower supporters lost no time in turning the tables on Stevenson. Inevitably, Republicans suggested that the Democratic candidate had no true concern for national defense, could not be trusted to keep America's strength up to the Soviet's, and similar nonsense. Governor Dewey was more virulent than most. The Vice President, with one foot firmly planted on the high road, credited Stevenson with good intentions but let it be understood that on matters of this kind Adlai is something of a simpleton.

The letter the Soviet Premier sent to President Eisenhower blasted all hope for a disinterested discussion of the question. By lining up the Soviet with Stevenson's position, especially during the feverish days of a Presidential campaign, Bulganin introduced a fatal element. Though the President's reply may have been shortsighted, Bulganin surely had it coming.

Bulganin's letter, which put Stevenson in a most uncomfortable position, was doubtless a propaganda move. With his hasty reply, the President may have fallen into the trap dug for the U.S., as Stevenson claimed. But the President had to think of the election at home. His answer was tailored to fit the needs of the Republican campaign.

Mr. Stevenson granted that the President's pique was justified, but he added quickly that by not putting one foot in the door the Soviet Premier opened, the President had missed a golden opportunity. Considering the needs of *his* campaign, Stevenson had to say this or something like it.

With all these elements to consider, it is little wonder that the central argument about hydrogen-bomb tests got sidetracked. The arguments, both for and against, were quickly fogged up in partisan passions and political ambition. Coming when it did, the argument was doomed to such a fate. Did Stevenson really expect the President to come out and congratulate him for making the suggestion? Did he not put the Administration on the spot?

Putting the Republicans on the spot made for good Democratic politics. But in the end the price may come high. The Administration is now in a position where it may feel obliged to take a rigid stand on this question. It is possible that if Eisenhower is re-elected, the Republicans will still feel they are on the spot and hesitate to budge for fear of being taunted for their campaign position.

Disarmament is the most serious problem in the world today. It, above all other questions, should never get entangled with Party loyalty. Whoever our next President is, he should feel free to move on this question which involves not only the security of the United States but the future of mankind. But after this controversy, is either of the two candidates as free as he should be?

Whether Mr. Stevenson spoke wisely or not remains to be settled. That the subject should have been introduced when it was seems as shortsighted as it was unpromising.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE STAGE

THE DEBUTANTE SLOUCH

IT WOULD be mollifying to assume that Mr. William Douglas Home's pastel comedy has suffered a sea change in transatlantic passage. I suspect, however, with alarm, that we are seeing rather as much of (and in) "The Reluctant Debutante" as those Londoners whom it has beguiled for some seasons. Nothing in the American experience can prepare us for the fragile, disarming nullity of "The Reluctant Debutante": our own plays of comparable scale, with their urban malice or hard, cracking smartness, seem, in juxtaposition, to have issued from a roiling inferno of personal stress.

Here the climate is bland and becalmed, the atmosphere one of fantasy—neither exotic nor elegant, but comfortably genteel. A delicate schizophrenia floats about Mr. Home's social motifs. Do pushing Mayfair mamas, for example—Mrs. Bennets of the cocktail brigade—still invest £5000 in the tribal rite of launching a daughter in London society? Mr. Home suggests Yes, though I rather think the Chancellor of the Exchequer would suggest No. And in this fevered day of U and Non-U, what would be Miss Nancy Mitford's frosty judgment of an aspiring U who displays social invitations on the *mantel?* Mr. Home's debutante will never, I fear, make Debrett's, no matter how much she consorts with variously dingy members of the peerage. She and her mama, like their creator, want the best of both worlds: the froth and savor of the aristocratic ambience, married to the solid assurances of the bourgeoisie.

Style, which could hardly have elevated "The Reluctant Debutante" to wit or truth, might conceivably have raised it to charm: Mr. Cyril Ritchard's direction gives the play nothing beyond a rigid, obstreperous gloss of vulgarity, tarting up its pallor with the rouge of overstatement. Miss Adrienne Allen, wholly admirable in the venal, mendacious world of Restoration farce, subtly flats her role here, giving the part efficiency and brass, when it wants a vaporous energy. Mr. John Merivale brings a fine romantic presence and glow to his early scenes, but fails to sustain that flame: his ardor remains banked, he himself bemused and dilatory. I have rarely seen love passages so little brushed with any grace of passion. The debutante is played by Miss Anna Massey with a style and intention securely her own, compounded of flailing arms (Miss Massey's are forever describing meaningless arabesques in the air), the loping gait of a hockey mistress, an asthmatic crouch, and vocal inflections maddening in their lack of variety. All of this is dangerously susceptible to parody, though Miss Massey seems innocent of that awareness. Only Mr. Wilfrid Hyde White—by ignoring the play, his fellow-performers, and to some extent, the visible world—triumphs. Mr. Hyde White, who resembles nothing so much as a sleepy armadillo, sports and parries with his role, baffling it into nullity. He has all the unique charm of something in nature, so indisputably himself that he need not trouble to assume the guise of anyone else. His image lingers longest in a play which offers more to the social analyst than to the critic, and which has the bizarre fascination of an anthropological relic, jutting anachronistically out of the cubist museum of Broadway. (*At the Henry Miller.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

BEAVER!

LIKE THE elephant to the blind men, Michael Todd's scintillating "Around the World in 80 Days" is many things to as many people. It could be considered a travelogue, since Phileas Fogg and his manservant, Passepartout, chase around the globe in their determination to win the bet and scurry from London to Paris (which is beautiful, as is the French countryside seen by the departing travelers from a balloon) to Spain, to Suez, to India, to Hong Kong, to Yokohama, to San Francisco, across the U. S. and back to London. And the film could be considered, by those interested in technical aspects, as a great improvement in the Todd-AO Process, with its powerful illumination, impressive color filmed in 65-millimeter, projection on an enormous, curved screen (that still gives some distortion on the sides) and the fine sound system which has advanced considerably since the first Todd-AO venture, "Oklahoma!" The film could also be considered an adventure thriller: Fogg and Passepartout have quite an exciting time of it trying to keep on "shedule" (as it's pronounced by the very British Mr. Fogg) in spite of storms, unforeseen delays such as the rescuing of an Indian Maharanee from a funeral pyre, and the villainous efforts of Mr. Fix, an English detective who suspects Fogg of being a bank robber and attaches himself to the party at Suez. The film could also be considered a delightful entertainment and a grand spoof with plenty of delicious satire on the English and on movies themselves.

But to a large part of the audience, "Around the World in 80 Days" is a game; for in addition to the four leading players there are some forty stars, listed by Producer Todd as "Cameo Players," some of whom turn up only once in a "bit" role, like Fernandel and John Mills as cabbies, Frank Sinatra as a pianist,

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Peter Lorre as a steward, Gilbert Roland and Cesar Romero as Tangierian visitors in Spain; some have a few lines to help put over a joke, like Marlene Dietrich, George Raft and Red Skelton in a Barbary Coast saloon, Charles Boyer as a travel agent, Ronald Colman as a railroad official in India, Beatrice Lillie as a Church Mission lass, Hermione Gingold and Glynis Johns as "sporting ladies" in a London pub, Buster Keaton as a train conductor; a few stay with the plot and are important to it, like Finlay Currie, Trevor Howard, Basil Sydney, Ronald Squires and Robert Morley as British-British members of the Reform Club in London who bet that Fogg cannot get around the world in eighty days; and then there are a couple of top names like Bullfighter Luis Miguel Dominguin and Dancer Jose Greco who turn up in Spain and contribute greatly to the picture's slick entertainment. You soon find yourself playing this version of Beaver, greeting with glee each new star who turns up in an unexpected place. Todd's trick with the plethora of stars may have been quite distracting in a serious film, but no one is expected to take "Around the World" seriously.

That is why one wonders how such a good showman as Michael Todd happened to take himself seriously at the beginning of his movie. For no apparent reason, he opens the film with a prologue narrated by Edward R. Murrow, who comments on Jules Verne and the changing times while we are shown on the screen, first, Georges Melies' fantastic silent film, "A Trip to the Moon," made around 1900, and second, some 1956 shots of a rocket taking off at White Sands, New Mexico. The contrasts are obvious and Murrow hopes we will use our new learning and methods wisely. Then we get on to Phileas Fogg in London in 1872 and the fun begins. In the two lead roles, David Niven, as the eccentric-daring-stuffy-imaginative Englishman, and Cantinflas, as his loyal-thoughtful-courageous-ogling valet, are absolutely perfect. Cantinflas, a sort of Latin-American Chaplin, has the greater opportunity to display his spectacular talents, and display them he does —in a Spanish dance, fighting a bull, as a Japanese circus performer, being chased by Sioux Indians or just being the superb valet.

The other two lead roles: Robert Newton as the snoopy Mr. Fix, and Shirley MacLaine as the rescued Indian Maharanee who falls in love with Fogg, left me rather cold. Newton overdid his part and Miss MacLaine colorlessly underdid hers. The fault here, I think, is due to Director Michael Anderson who, though greatly successful with the other members of his large cast, gave these two players too little direction. But on the whole my complaints are few with this extraordinary movie. It could easily have been shortened; some of the incidents seem repetitive and continued too long after the joke's point is made. But don't leave before the finale—which in this case is called an epilogue and which consists of a listing of the cast and credits done in an imaginative cartoon and montage style (by Saul Bass). It is one of the brightest contributions to the movie.

There are many things about "Around the World" that would have surprised Jules Verne: the witty script with so much amusing dialogue that S. J. Perleman wrote from the Verne novel, the handsome costumes and sets, Victor Young's delightful score which has some of the pleasantest uses of national airs ever to turn up in such an international film, and the gentle kidding of various nationalities wherever these ardent travelers go. But above all, Verne would have been most astounded at Michael Todd's superlative production that takes us around the world, sometimes in old-fashioned cinema and sometimes in three-dimensional Todd-AO, and traveling by train, ship, balloon, elephant, ostrich, rickshaw, horse—and even, in one scene, by dumb waiter.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"APPRAISAL OF SOCIALISM"

Brussels, Belgium.

TO the Editors: Will Herberg's thoughtful and scholarly article, "Appraisal of Socialism" [Oct. 12] is to be commended. I, however, am of the opinion that it is inadequate in its alleged appraisal of what has happened to socialist thought and influence in Europe and feel that much of what Mr. Herberg says is not only misleading but simply not true. What he does *not* say is extremely significant and that is the fact that socialism *as a religious faith* is extremely powerful in many countries of Europe.

The writer has spent over ten years in Asia and, for the past eight months, he has lived in Europe. During my long years in Asia, I was deeply impressed by the striking religious nature of the socialist leaders of India, just as in Burma the Buddhist socialist leader indicated that in the Asian atmosphere "socialism" had undergone basic transformation.

In Europe, on the contrary—and there are some remarkable exceptions to this!—I have been pained and shocked to find anti-clericalism of such force, just as the sectarian approach, to a Catholic, has seemed to me to indicate a very un-social socialism.

When Mr. Herberg states that some responsible Socialists "today think in terms of a national front against anti-democratic forces within and without," although I think it a good prayer, it would be difficult to justify this moment as representative of the situation in some countries of Europe where, in fact, one finds the ranks of the workers divided sharply because one

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group accepts a Socialist faith, another a revealed religion.

It is perhaps true that we are witnessing "the rapid dissolution of the integral Socialist system under the impact of contemporary historical reality." I would rather phrase it that many of the justifications for the "system" either were not valid or history has overtaken them, yet, despite the changes, the basic "faith" divides many Socialists from Christians who, in fact, accept social teachings and a social philosophy the elements of which should *in se* not offend a modern Socialist.

There can and there should be a national front against anti-democratic forces, within and without. One bar is anti-clericalism and its implications. Perhaps Mr. Herberg in his wisdom should continue his appraisal by examining this vital problem in realistic and frank terms.

RICHARD L. G. DEVERALL.

Berkeley, Calif.

TO the Editors: Will Herberg's "Appraisal of Socialism" [Oct. 12] seems to me to give too much weight to the failures and too little to the successes. American experience, it is true, has proven that a close approach to social and economic equality and a prolonged state of mass prosperity may be achieved in a social order in which private entrepreneurs retain the formal right of property and also a substantial amount of control over the instruments of production. In denying such a possibility, socialism was in error. But the socialist movement has been proved fundamentally right in its beliefs that collective entities, and especially the State, must be systematically used as organs of economic welfare for the sake of justice and stability; that such a role of the State requires restriction of property rights; that against the resistance of property owners the necessary changes cannot be realized without an appeal to the self-interest of the underprivileged, and without their organization for the purpose of political and economic combat.

The latter point, which implies the concept of the class struggle, obviously has a different meaning, dependent on whether we think in terms of a struggle limited by ethical rules, which safeguard the common interests of humanity, or of a war without restrictions. This vital distinction is not identical with, though certainly related to, the difference between revolutionary and evolutionary creeds, for a party or group may approve of violent revolution against an oppressive regime, without thereby repudiating ethical restraints. It was for this reason that many socialists did not clearly face the issue of restricted versus unlimited class struggle as long as the movement was in opposition to despotic powers of overwhelming strength; but from 1890 on, the opponents of "class war" in the socialist ranks, e.g. Brousse, Jaurès, Bernstein, the Webbs, pointed out the choice which the socialist movement had to make, and eventually the overwhelming majority of Western socialists made their choice in favor of a class struggle limited by aversion from violence and by respect for the human rights of their opponents. Does Mr. Herberg include this version of the class struggle concept in his adverse judgment? He could do so, it seems to me, only if in his opinion the sense of justice of the upper classes all by itself had proved effective enough to bring about the needed reforms, and I do not think that anybody can draw this conclusion from the historical record.

As to the alleged failure of socialism "on the philosophical level": which socialist, later than Fourier and Cabet, has presented socialism "as a total 'philosophy of life' with a revelation of the truth and guidance for mankind on every level of human existence"? Certainly not Benoit Malon, who coined the phrase "socialisme integral" but meant it in quite a different sense; nor Karl Marx, much as he tried to integrate his ideas into a total view of the world. This, of course, is a necessary effort for any thinker, socialist or other, who strives for consistency. Marx never claimed that there was a *specifically* socialist "philosophy of life"; by basing his socialist propositions on philosophic foundations supplied by Hegel, Feuerbach and others, he implicitly repudiated any such claim. The socialist movement as a whole found its basic creed in the brotherhood of man and regarded its social and economic program as an application of this creed. Neither Mr. Herberg nor myself believes that the basic creed was wrong or is obsolete now; hence, why should socialism "as a political-ideological *Weltanschauung*" have "failed disastrously"? Because of its "materialism"? Mr. Herberg was emphatically right in putting this term in quotes; the fact that the Marxists called themselves materialists is no proof that they *were* materialists, and as to the socialist movement in general, who would regard Jaurès, Debs, Bernstein, Lansbury or even Rosa Luxemburg as protagonists of materialism? When Mr. Herberg speaks of the socialists' "eschatological faith in economics and politics as salvation," and of the abandonment of this faith "in disillusion," I do not quite know what he means; if he wished to say that the economic interpretation of history has been found to contain no more than a partial truth, that is correct enough, but the discovery is fairly ancient: most socialist writers on the subject, within the last sixty years, have been saying just that, sometimes by criticizing Marx and sometimes by interpreting him. On the other hand, the Fascist and Communist threats to human freedom and the menace of atomic annihilation are largely matters of "economics and politics"—whatever else they may also be—and therefore I do not think that Mr. Herberg wants to minimize the *practical* importance of political and

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economic issues. But where, then, does he see the failure of socialist philosophy?

Socialism, of course, has a "totalitarian potential"; so has every faith, and therefore all believers need to be aroused to an effort to prevent the potential evil from materializing—many socialists have made this effort with exemplary energy. One can argue a long time over the question of whether Fascism and Communism have been fostered more by socialist ideas or by the failure of Western society to apply socialist remedies in time to alleviate the Great Depression, which gave the totalitarian creeds such an enormous chance. But let us grant that ideas are dangerous. During the war, it was a favorite game of some Western superpatriots to prove that Fichte, Frederick the Great and Nietzsche had supplied some elements to Nazi ideology (conveniently forgetting the share of Machiavelli, Carlyle, Napoleon, etc.) and that therefore the horrors of Auschwitz were a true product of the German spirit. Probably Mr. Herberg will agree with me that it is no more convincing to hold Bebel or Debs or Sidney Webb responsible for Moscow's slave labor camps than to base an indictment of Fichte on Hitler's massacre of the Jews; but again, if we are agreed on this point, how can socialism's "totalitarian potential" form a point of accusation? If a man is responsible for the misuse of his ideas by others, what thinker would be safe?

For the United States, Britain and Scandinavia, Mr. Herberg is right in saying that class alignments are no longer fundamental: the reason for this "bankruptcy" of socialism is that a very large part of socialist aims has been realized. The nations which have traveled so far on the road to socialism did of course not encounter any signposts informing them that they were leaving the realm of capitalism, nor are any such signs ahead of them. The "extraordinary capacity" of capitalism "for inner reform" may as well be described as the capacity of socialism to produce major benefits without being realized one hundred per cent. Since Eduard Bernstein, with the consent of a host of socialist writers, anticipated the essence of this experience half a century ago, it seems to me that Mr. Herberg takes an unduly narrow view of the socialist tradition when he says that the "mixed economy of today" does not correspond to the "traditional collectivist scheme," and that he interprets with equal narrowness the concept of "socialist economics," of which he thinks that "very little, if anything, is left." The appreciation of the market mechanism, which Mr. Herberg apparently regards as a recent innovation in socialist literature, he could have found already in Jaurès's *Organisation Socialiste,* written in 1895, and in practically all writings by socialist economists (except a few orthodox Marxists) during the interwar period.

Moreover, if some of the socialist policies of an earlier day are no longer needed in the economically most advanced countries, what about the other parts of the world? From France to Indonesia to Japan to Bolivia, class alignments are still exceedingly important, because of social injustices which cannot be remedied without organized pressure on the part of the underprivileged; even large-scale nationalization may be required where political misuse of economic power is too widespread or monopolistic tendencies are insufficiently checked by entrepreneurs' interest in economic growth. Therefore socialism has still a mission in the world. Even in the United States, where a Socialist Party could serve no useful purpose today, some elements of the socialist heritage are still sorely needed. To mention only the most important point: the idea of eliminating the business cycle by monetary policy alone is just now drastically revealing its inadequacy. The socialist idea (going back at least to Saint-Simon) of national production planning, not as a means to suffocate individual initiative but to protect it from frustration by economic hazards, will have to be remembered if we are to ban the specters of depression and inflation permanently from our lives.

CARL LANDAUER.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I sympathize with John Cournos' statement (in his review of *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders,* Oct. 5) that "the complete story of guerrilla ways of conducting war would be well worth undertaking." But then Mr. Cournos begins his very brief chronicle with the activities of the Spanish people directed against Napoleon—no doubt the start of the *word,* guerrilla, but not of the type of warfare the word describes. Guerrilla warfare was of very great consequence during the American Revolution—the names of Fox, Marion, Sumter are enough to demonstrate that fact. It is further of interest that the first professional study of partisan warfare was published in Germany in 1786 and came from the pen of Captain Johann Ewald; it was based upon the author's observations while a Hessian officer engaged in trying to defeat the American rebels.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

AN APPEAL

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An Important, Original, Provocative Study

THE STORY OF JAZZ. By Marshall Stearns. Oxford University Press. $5.75.

By NAT HENTOFF

MARSHALL Stearns, Associate Professor of Medieval Literature at Hunter College, has also made a profession of jazz, his most passionate avocation. For several years, he has been the leading academic figure in a field thus far nearly donless. He instituted increasingly successful courses in jazz history at the New School, New York University, and now is sending many of his former students as proselytizers among the exurbanites in a number of adult education centers. He is the founder and executive director of the Institute of Jazz Studies, a rather impoverished, largely one-man operation that has nonetheless made available a large and well-catalogued library of books, periodicals and recordings for the stray researcher. The professor has also become organizer-in-chief of panels recruited annually for festivals and quasi-festivals at such sites as Newport and Music Inn in the Berkshires.

With all of this background as a devoted teacher, it was hoped that this book, five years in the making, might be the first thoroughly satisfactory history of jazz. But *The Story of Jazz* has turned out instead to be of chief value for its admirable introduction to pre-jazz backgrounds and for its probing, closing observations on "The Nature of Jazz" and "Jazz and the Role of the Negro." Of jazz history proper there is much that is missing, and what is included is too often fragmentized in rushes of incomplete summarizing. The book, however, should certainly be read by anyone seriously interested in jazz; but while its value to the beginner is considerable, it needs supplementing if the evolution of the mainstream of jazz is to be clear.

The first half of the book is excellent, the most lucid and stimulating discussion of likely antecedents of jazz, West African and other, yet in print. He begins fortunately with a fact too few European writers on jazz have fully assimilated: ". . . contrary to the popular notion, nobody is born with a fine sense of rhythm—people simply learn it, sometimes quite unconsciously."

Mr. Stearns then indicates several of the characteristics of West African music (so far as can be determined by musicologists three centuries later) that were carried and blended by Negro slaves into the cultures of the West Indies and North America. He points out, incidentally, that the result of the fusion of traditions depended in large part "on whether the slave was sold to a British-Protestant or a Latin-Catholic colony." (New Orleans, the early focal center of classic jazz, was strongly Latin-Catholic in many of its conditioning roots.)

Perhaps the most important, relatively new contribution made by Mr. Stearns to jazz historiography is his discussion of the role of the Negro in the course of "The Great Awakening," that ad-lib torrent of religious revivalism that swept through many areas in America in the early 1800's. It is his belief that "the Great Awakening . . . led to the first extensive blending in the United States outside of New Orleans . . . of European and West African music."

The first half ends with equally sound and well-researched summations of such essential pre-jazz materials as the work song, the blues, minstrelsy, the spiritual and ragtime. The setting for early jazz in New Orleans, the first important center from which it spread, is also discussed; unfortunately, there is no coverage on pre-jazz and very early jazz activities in the North, along the Atlantic coast, and in the Southwest—a field about which very little has been written and all too few questions have been asked.

The book's soft center is a confused melange entitled "The Jazz Age," which roars through a string of names each of which is accompanied by some slight, helpful background information, but which is almost wholly unsatisfactory as a history of jazz in its first three decades. Stearns undoubtedly knows that history with the thoroughness that only years of repetitive lecturing can produce. He makes the error, however, of assuming that the reader will be partially if not completely familiar with that history.

The later chapters on the swing era and modern jazz are somewhat less whirling, but neither are they treated with sufficient detail and depth of perspective. There is, incidentally, a quite informative chapter on the impact of Afro-Cuban music on modern jazz. But Mr. Stearns does not return to the searching level of the first half until his provocative, but debatable, discussion on the differences between jazz and classical music. In the course of that chapter, he also comments on other musical cultures to emphasize the point that there are criteria of musical excellence independent of the tempered Western European tradition.

Most provocative of the final chapters is a sensitive, initial study of "Jazz and the Role of the Negro," an examination of the "mask," of the ambivalency of attitude toward himself in which the Negro often lives and to which he must react. There is a brief discussion about the growing internationalization of jazz and some speculation concerning its future.

The Story of Jazz, as befits the work of a conscientious academician, contains bibliographic notes to each chapter; a first-rate general bibliography in the back of the book; a list of current magazines; an index and sixteen illuminating photographs. Although we continue to await the first major consolidation of jazz history in book form, Professor Stearns' volume contains much that is durable. No future historian of jazz can afford to ignore it.

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Heroic Act to Sterile Gesture

THE FIELD OF VISION. By Wright Morris. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

By JACK PATTERSON

In *The Field of Vision,* Wright Morris has brought together a small group of American tourists in a Mexican bullring. Americans at the *corrida!* We unlimber our vocabulary of tauromachy and ready ourselves for some conventional literary stance: to smile, say, at their ignorance, deride their Babbittry, and while they scramble for the exits after the first kill, turn to admire the next *veronica.*

But Mr. Morris has a more serious aim. The bullfight moves in and out of focus, while his travelers slowly unravel a few slender threads from the patched tapestry of the past. They weave the fragile strands into new, ever-changing patterns, the shuttle of thought powered by a ceaseless drive to order and shape experience into some understandable and endurable form.

The search for time past leads to a well-trodden literary path. But Mr. Morris travels it with high purpose and uncompromising standards. These, along with an imaginative grasp of his theme and technical skill, combine to produce a distinguished novel whose power and resonance commend it to all serious readers.

Mr. Morris, who was born in Nebraska, wrote once that his work bears "the stamp of the plains." This stamp is on *The Field of Vision,* his tenth novel. But the plains are not bountiful seas of wheat rolling under a yellow sky. The eye moves across the illimitable grayness of Mr. Morris' plains, fixing eagerly on the relief of windmill, water tank or clapboard house. "Objects, what few there are on the plains," Mr. Morris added, "acquire a dense symbolical signficance."

This vision of plains and objects may serve as a metaphor to illuminate the structure of the present novel. At the outset, seven Americans are waiting for the first *corrida* to begin. McKee, his wife, her aged father and their small grandson, came to Mexico on vacation. By chance, the McKees met Gordon Boyd, an out-at-the-heels writer whom they had known in their youth. Boyd persuaded them to attend the fight with him, his friend Dr. Lehmann, a quasi-psychoanalyst, and the doctor's patient and friend, Paula Kahler.

Five of these people (the exceptions are Paula Kahler and the child) turn their thoughts backward again and again to one or two spare episodes in their lives—objects standing alone and half-obscured on the bleak horizons of the past. Gradually, light begins to fill the sky, details emerge; first the middle distance, then the foreground comes into view, until the whole landscape is at last exposed to our gaze. Each past event, in this way, is slowly perceived as a central motif within an elaborate ambiance.

Various episodes serve the novel's characters as reminders of the past. Some are trivial: Boyd once impulsively kissed Mrs. McKee. Another is ludicrous: Boyd once ran onto a baseball field to get Ty Cobb's autograph. Cobb fled and Boyd ripped the pocket from Cobb's pants. Or grotesque: Dr. Lehmann, called to treat a chambermaid named Paula Kahler, found his patient to be a man with an unshakable belief that he was a woman.

Each person's proccupation with such events as these is impaled on a single unifying idea: the notion of transformation. It recurs constantly throughout the novel in myriad forms. The bullfight, to take an important example, the spectacle in which cape and sword, artistry and courage transform slaughter into an act of beauty and terror, supplies specific images and pervades and enriches the entire concept.

This notion of transformation lies at the novel's core. From chapter to chapter, the process of steadily unfolding meaning gives the book movement. Behind this movement —its impetus—is the power of the imagination's "unchanging drives" which "seek to transform an ever-changing set of facts to their own terms." For Boyd, Lehmann and the others, their reactions to certain events become the terms by which they attempt to grasp imagitively the facts of their lives. And as Mr. Morris handles the theme, the result is a penetrating view of particular lives and, by extension, aspects of the general human condition.

Boyd's understanding of his past is given in terms of the pocket he ripped from Ty Cobb's pants. All through his brief early success, and his later longer failures, he kept the pocket, as a bull's ear, an emblem of past triumph, a talisman to enchant the future. But the charm's power to transform, Boyd comes to see, existed only in the child's garden—the world of baseball and marbles. Beyond the gate, in the forest of giants, that power vanished.

At the end of *The Field of Vision,* Boyd, the hero, finds his life drained of its promise. Caught in the past, like the novel's other figures, he is only a spectator of heroism to which even his response is muted. And within society today, Mr. Morris concludes, the most despairing transformation of all: everywhere, the heroic act changed to the sterile gesture.

Classic of War

GALLIPOLI. By Alan Moorehead. Harper. $4.50.

By JOHN COURNOS

THE word *if* can, and often does, suggest a sense of profound frustration and failure. "The terrible 'if's' accumulate," said Winston Churchill with reference to the Gallipoli campaign he instituted against the Turks in 1915. Indeed, this campaign was preceded by a very big *if* which might well have been avoided and made the unfortunate campaign unnecessary as well. The Young Turks were seeking an ally when the first world war began, and they would have been happy to have Britain for one. But the British were indifferent and careless, diplomati-

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cally speaking, rather superior in their attitude to a country which had not won a battle in generations and which considered Russia as its natural and perpetual enemy. And so, quite needlessly, they let Germany steal a march on them and permitted Turkey to become her ally at an incalculable cost of matériel and men and the probable prolongation of the war.

The second and very important *if* came into play when Britain, with France, sent a powerful fleet to conquer the Dardanelles, and on March 18th, 1915, after losing some warships, was on the verge of breaking through, but gave up the attempt without knowing how near the effort had come to success. *If* they had only known! As it was, they decided to wait until an army could be gathered at Gallipoli; it was hoped that the army and the navy jointly would force the Straits. In the meantime the Turks and the Germans were not idle, but were strengthening their positions and accumulating munitions.

It would be needless here to recapitulate the story of the Gallipoli failure recorded in histories. But it is fitting to state here that Mr. Moorehead's narrative of the campaign comes near to being a classic of its kind. But even better than his lucid story of the objectives of Sir Ian Hamilton's army and its achievements and failures is his account of the common soldier who for the first time, untrained as he was for war, in a land remote, alien, and composed for the most part of barren rocky hills, adjusted himself to endure and to face with untold courage not only the fire of the enemy but also conditions of existence infinitely worse than anything his brother soldiers had to face in the trenches in France.

This was rather a real come-down from the first optimism and exuberant confidence which had animated the army and the navy, symbolized by the poet Rupert Brooke, who had been enraptured by being one of the earliest members of the "Constantinople Expedition." "Should we be a Turning Point in History?" he wrote. "Oh God! I've never been quite so happy in my life. . ." But Rupert Brooke died before he could see his dream come to naught.

The sense of futility which developed as the weeks went by without tangible results was punctuated by acts of outstanding heroism. Mr. Moorehead, an Australian, is particularly eloquent on the subject of the Anzacs, who clung with such tenacity to the limited bridgehead they held that they were never again assaulted in full force. "There was not one of those glorious young men," wrote Compton Mackenzie, "who might not himself have been Ajax or Diamed, Hector or Achilles."

But the Anzacs were not alone in this drama of glory, so intermingled with futility. "Theirs but to do and die." The casualties were indeed terrific. "Casualties, what do I care for casualties?" said Hunter-Weston, the British Corps Commander. And his words were not so different from those of Mustafa Kemal (later Dictator of Turkey) who, addressing his troops, said: "I don't order you to attack. I order you to die." But the spectacular heroes were always the individuals. There was Lt. Commander Bernard Freyberg of the British Navy (later General Lord Freyberg, V.C.), who, plunging into the icy midnight sea in enemy territory, planted in different spots three lighted flares and, suffering from cramp, was picked up in the darkness and restored to life. There was the intrepid Lieut. Commander Nasmith (later Admiral) who also won his Victoria Cross by incredible deeds epic in character. He began by negotiating the Straits in a submarine, reaching Constantinople itself. In a space of three months of under-sea marauding he alone accounted for one hundred and one enemy ships, both war vessels and transports.

It was the Gallipoli campaign that saw the rise of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, his country's modernizer. His great moment came in battle. He knew it. It must have been such a moment as Bonaparte felt when he faced the British in Toulon and won.

This is a fascinating book and deserves a permanent place on one's book shelf.

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Good Reporting

RUSSIA WITHOUT STALIN: THE EMERGING PATTERN. By Edward Crankshaw. Viking Press. $3.75.

By FRANCIS B. RANDALL

RUSSIA, of all the countries of the earth, is the best known to the American reading public. This is partly because Russian society and politics are so much simpler and easier to grasp than, say, those of France, and partly because Russia is, unfortunately, so much stronger and therefore more important and more the center of attention than France. And it is partly because so many acute observers like Edward Crankshaw have given us vivid accounts of their Russian studies and travels.

Russia Without Stalin is just such a colorful account. No sooner does Mr. Crankshaw step off the seedy airplane at Moscow airport than he finds himself helping a girl Intourist guide who has been wandering about like a chicken with its head cut off looking for two English tourists "lost" in the luggage room; later in the evening he has to help his taxi driver find Moscow. When Mr. Crankshaw stumbles into a funeral he is received like a wonder-working holy man from afar. When Mr. Crankshaw picks up a Russian newspaper, he spots items like the complaint of a Communist correspondent who visits a remote village on the feast day of its saint, and finds it the excuse for a three day spree of total, insensate drunkenness, with local Party members selling the vodka. Know a thousand anecdotes, Mr. Crankshaw seems to say, and you know Russia.

But this book is more than a collection of anecdotes. Its central chapters are the best and most thorough study ever published on the graft, racketeering, and juvenile delinquency that characterize Russian life. Mr. Crankshaw uses the Russian press to document his picture of the Soviet Union as "one vast black market." Blocked by super-centralization and super-inefficiency, Russian business men have to resort to racketeers to get the raw materials to meet their factories' quotas. The only way for most Russians to get decent consumer goods is to enter a chain of mutual, personal, almost civilized influence-peddling, bribery, and theft. For the capable and idealistic young people there are careers in Russia, but a socially useful life is very bleak for the rest of the youth. So the rich children waste their lives in expensive debauchery, while the poor turn to sullen idleness, "hooliganism," and street crime.

Unfortunately, Mr. Crankshaw is weaker on general analysis than on firsthand reporting. He seems to believe in a Russian soul, a "Russian nature," "Russian character," "Russian blood," just as he believes that Kaganovich is barred from supreme power by his Jewish "race" —no, no, Mr. Crankshaw! As a history of Russia between the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech, this book is rather thin, and already out of date. Mr. Crankshaw cannot understand why Khrushchev "should suddenly, in

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late middle age, take to political theory," and suggests that he revived Leninism in order to clothe his régime in some authority that might impress the populace. Mr. Crankshaw does not recognize the strength of Communist ideology, and the persisting fanatical belief in it by all Communist Leaders. Consequently no pattern emerges from his chapter, "The Pattern Emerges." Consequently Mr. Crankshaw expects great changes in Russia. Consequently he says, "There are signs that [the Communist Party] will adapt itself to decency." Consequently he closes by watching some children playing in the sunshine in Kiev, and thinks that for the first time they have a chance of a better life. We cross our fingers.

Tract as Novel

JAMES BY THE GRACE OF GOD. By Hugh Ross Williamson. Regnery. $3.75.

By DEXTER ALLEN

THERE ARE histories, and novels—and there are tracts. Indeed, such an interchange and confusion prevails between these particular forms today, that one merely observes which purpose truly dominates and calls the name. *James by the Grace of God* is an extremely well-written and -contrived book; but, let us say it, it really isn't a novel at all. It is primarily a tract in defense of an ill-fated, Catholic monarch of England.

The book is written in such a black and white vein that the ridiculous accusations it attempts to refute are given a certain plausibility. All the Anglican lords, spiritual and temporal, are described as lecherous, perverse, or outrageously stupid. A novelist would have seen more creditable adversaries. After all, the reign of James II involved political issues, each side primarily concerned with material advantage. Even the aging Innocent XI was engaged in "an unrelenting struggle with Louis XIV, in which spiritual and temporal issues had become inextricably intertwined." And Louis XIV is often considered the most orthodox Catholic monarch of his time in Europe.

It is an embarrassing moment when the reader first watches James confront his illegitimate son, Berwick, and realizes that the King himself is not above lechery. But, for the author at least, James is eventually exonerated through a process of self-examination. One questions why there are not equally saving scenes for his adversaries. After all, the engaging Bishop of London, Compton, has about him the air of one acting in complete self-accord. Not only is he fully within his rights as a prelate, but he has the largest botanical collection (particularly of American flora) in England: a man of many parts. If Lord Churchill is a recognizable and thoroughly despicable opportunist, so Clarendon—the King's brother-in-law—acts according to his conscience and therefore preserves personal dignity in his eventual defection.

But these are the criticisms one levels against the novel. Regardless of Mr. Williamson's conviction that he has written a new type of novel, one based on scholarly work and beyond the pale of the conventional devices, he must be judged as an extremely talented pamphleteer—or a limited, unimaginative novelist. History in his hands is not the servant of art, but of political thesis. If *James by the Grace of God* is a tract, then the limitations of the book are not the author's, but those of the form he has selected.

As a final comment, this is a book that deserves wide reading and respect. It is an answer to the many tracts disguised as histories that defame a fine man and an adequate enough king.

REVIEWERS

Nat Hentoff is an associate editor of *Downbeat*.

Jack Patterson is on the editorial staff of a New York publishing house.

John Cournos is the author of *A Modern Plutarch* and other works.

Francis B. Randall is a member of the faculty of Amherst College.

Dexter Allen is the author of several historical novels.

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A Point of View

Editors, contributors and readers alike appear to agree that what is most significant and important about The Commonweal is that it is an embodiment of a point of view. Such is the conclusion reached after many personal conversations as well as from the tabulation of replies to questionnaires.

This viewpoint is most clearly manifest in The Commonweal's editorials each week on events and public issues. It also is developed, less directly perhaps, in a variety of articles on many subjects — social, cultural and political — and in dispatches like those of Michael P. Fogarty, Gunnar D. Kumlien and Robert Barrat.

The Commonweal's approach is perhaps one further degree less obvious in its many literary articles and reviews of current books, movies and plays. But it is also implicit there. In short, the parts of the magazine's varied content week by week add up to an integral whole.

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